Supportive Professional Staff Council Agenda
Thursday, February 8, 2018
Approved March 8, 2018
 Holmes Student Center Skyroom
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Call to Order
Approval of Agenda: Motion Tracy Rogers-Tryba Second Sandy Lopez
Approval of Minutes January 11, 2017 Sandi Carlisle moved Corinne second

Guest Speakers:
Dr. Anna Quider, Director of Federal Relations – Federal updates

Quider presented an update on several federal government issues.

Tax reform
Republicans have control of two of the major branches. Majority rules. They only need 218 votes in the house of reps. They can really pass whatever they want. Tax reform only needed 51 votes to pass the tax law and they had to use budget reconciliation to pass tax reform. But, the Senate has to work together more with the opposite side to pass legislation. As a side note: the average age of senators is 70. So, the health of ONE American can really shape policy of the nation.

As to the final bill, it is hoped that it will simplify the tax code, broaden the base and stimulate economic growth. It had the potential to have a major impact on higher education but luckily most of the negative things were not in the final bill. What made it into the final bill was:
- tax credits were all left in the final bill.
- Employer/ employee aspect of the bill with tuition waivers was also left alone.
- Education assistance as grants was also left the same.

One aspect that is different is charitable giving. The bill changed the tax law tax rates and standard deductions. They doubled the standard deduction. A lot of people who previously itemized will now be able to use a standard deduction. NIU could face adverse effects because people might not give without being able to deduct that on their taxes. Some estimates are that there could be a 39% reduction in giving. The silver lining is this aspect of the law has revived the discussion about charitable donation deduction line being added to the 1040 form, in the future.

Tax reform changes the accounting practices when counting unrelated business income so we’re not sure how that might affect our conference centers. But the main impacts of the bill were negotiated successfully and were put back in the bill.

The federal government shut down
That really does not have an immediate effect on NIU. If there were to be a protracted shut down, that would affect us a lot more. Congress and the president cannot agree on how the 2019 funding will be handled. We are still arguing about the budget that started OCTOBER 1, 2017! Senate deal is on the table and it looks great for NIU in terms of funding. Faculty are encouraged to apply for competitive grants. Don’t panic when you see what President Trump’s budget plan on Monday.

DACA issue
This issue is a key issue for this year and expires in less than a month from now. Illinois is fortunate that Dick Durbin is a leader on this issue. Senator Durbin has been working on this issue for 20 years now. Nancy Pelosi did the longest speech in history. They do expect some sort of DACA deal because no one wants it to die.

The Higher Education Act
This act is currently being reauthorized in the house and the senate said they are willing to review the legislation. NIU is looking at the bill and how that will affect our students. There will be information coming out in the news about all of that. So be aware of it and call your representative and senators as that discussion progresses.
A council member asked, “What is the best way to contact our senators and representatives?” Quinlan’s advice was that any way (letter, email, phone) is effective. But you definitely should be contacting them. Keep on them about issues that are important to NIU. A lot of the time no one talks to them about the importance of higher education. So they don’t see it as a critical issue. If you call, you can convince them that it is!

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Deb Miller, SPS Council Rep to Presidential Search Planning Committee – Update
Dr. Linda Saborio, Executive Secretary of University Council and Faculty Senate President

Presidential Search Update

The committee met recently and broke up into working groups. Miller handed out the NIU today article, which explains the groups and process. Meetings are open. Feel free to attend any and all.

Saborio is chairing the group on points of pride of NIU. In reviewing the call for the VP for administration and finance, it showed only one line about shared governance. Saborio would like each shared governance group to be better represented. She would like a bio and a photo for that committee. What should the president candidate know about our group as they come in to interview? They would like that information to them by March 29. Jeanne Meyer strongly recommended that we all have an equal representation in that packet. The executive committee will initially provide input and bring that to council for approval at our March meeting.

Announcements:
a.) Welcome to NNGO 390 Class Members. Students from the class joined our meeting to review board processes
b.) “Experience NIU” Series (February through April). Keep an eye out for those events.
c.) EAP Trainings/Workshops – Spring Schedule. This schedule is available online.
d.) STEM Café – Smart Meters – March 21, 2018, Giovanni’s in Rockford, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Committee Reports:
Awards – Watson reported the committee will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to review the nominees. We received 10 nominations this year. A call for nominations will be going out for the other council awards.

Communications & Technology – have not met but communications have been going out. The same categories will go for the next two cycles. Listserv will be managing that through this committee.

Constitution & Elections – no report

Events – Watson reported there is an event coming up next week to tour the greenhouse on campus. Plans are still in the works for an Olympic viewing / lunch Thursday, February 22. Other events we have coming up include a lunch at Flamingo’s in early March, a cooking demonstration/nutrition presentation with the hospitality students, and a tour of the sculptures on campus, once the weather gets nicer.

Professional Development – Sandi reported that they have been working to get all the professional development opportunities at the university on ONE web page. Rachel Xidis has a rough draft of it that they are reviewing. They are working at how we can develop tags to pull in information automatically. They are also interested in developing a leadership series to pull in experts from alumni, annuitants, etc.

Regional Community Relations – no report

SPS Dependent Scholarship Fund – Bredberg reported that there are 5 applicants. They hope to announce the recipient at the March meeting.

Advocacy (formerly Workplace Issues) – Builta reported that they have the charge of taking a look at updating the SPS handbook. Currently, they are looking at the current document. What does that look like? How usable is it? There are 200 some odd links on that page and they have split it up among their committee member to review readability of it.
**Vice-President’s Report**

a.) Committee’s Summary Report

**Unfinished Business**

a.) SPS Compensation/Degree/Certification Policy – No Update
b.) Search Committee Updates
c.) Staff Retreat Follow-up

**New Business**

a.) SUCSS Procedure Update (Celeste Latham/Laura Alexander)

Merit board has been researching how positions are classified around campus. Only minor grammatical issues were fixed for now but more might be coming. The investigation generated from the Office of Inspector General. The state needed a way to hold universities responsible for how we classify positions and why they are SPS or operating staff. All SPS positions have to be reviewed who are in that classification but should be operating staff. The review process takes 16 months to complete. HR has also changed the ranking of people so that the top scores for reviewing positions is broader than just the top three and they are working with departments to help review specialty expertise so that they know which candidates are best in the category. Latham also reported that positions that were flagged for civil service change over once the SPS person in that category left the job, are now going to be changed to civil service anyway.

b.) Potential representation on the State Legislative Liaison search committee
   a. Discussion of search committees and task forces (procedure discussion) – Mark Pietrowski and Jeff Salmon were both self-nominated

**University Committee Reports**

- Board of Trustees – 3/8/2018
- Board of Trustees Committees – 2/15/2018
- University Council – 2/28/2018
- Operating Staff Council – 3/1/2018
- Faculty Senate – 2/21/2018

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn 11:45 p.m. by Steve Builta seconded Margie Myles

**Representatives:** Please contact your alternate and the SPS Council Secretary, Linda Watson, if you are unable to attend the meeting. **Alternates:** You are invited to attend all meetings.